

Confidence in Katastematic Pleasure

Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 11:00 PM

This thread grows out of another thread, specifically [my "soapboxing" posts that were a response to @A Gardner and @Cassius where I "took a stand for ataraxia."](#)

For those who don't want too much review, my primary contentions were:

1. Epicurus advocates strengthening a quiet, calm, anxiety-free mind.
2. Equanimity/tranquility/ataraxia is available at all times, even under duress and trying circumstances.
3. IF we can cultivate ataraxia, we have a much better chance of making a good choice to remove, move around, or avoid the "obstacle to pleasure" than we would if we get anxious, feel "psychological unrest" or get agitated or fearful.
4. Tranquility / ataraxia are not the "goal of life" but Epicurus stresses over and over the importance of freedom from disturbance in the mind and "pain in the body" (I have a problem with this kind of translation of aponia, but we'll leave that for another time.) (Still not that time btw 😊)
5. PLEASURE is the goal, and tranquility is pleasure, freedom from anxiety is pleasure, but it is pleasure that is always available to us which is why Epicurus places such importance on it - NOT exclusionary importance as the ONLY pleasure we should pursue but of significant and paramount importance to give us the possibility of the best pleasurable life possible in addition to all the other pleasures we can experience.
6. My metaphor of what is meant by ataraxia / tranquility / calm is the picture of a musk ox, facing into the howling winter wind, legs braces, ice forming on its hair and face, knowing the disturbance will eventually pass ("Pain is short...") and it can then go on and paw the snow for luscious plants to eat. (Note: just a metaphor btw. Not saying musk oxen are Epicureans.)
7. My reading of katastematic pleasures, including ataraxia, are those that arise from within ourselves and that these are the only pleasures in life that we can be confident of at all times.
8. The kinetic pleasures arise from our interaction with external stimuli and phenomena.
9. Metrodorus stresses the importance of both kinds of pleasures, but he also wrote a book entitled "On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects."
10. [Cassius](#) raises the point that the following is a new assertion to him and he is not "aware of textual citations to support it": my reading of katastematic pleasures, including ataraxia, are those that arise from within ourselves and that these are the only pleasures in life that we can be confident of at all times.

11. [Cassius](#) countered with citing Diogenes Laertius quote about the wise man will "cry out and lament" when on the rack.
- I countered his quotation with the quote just prior to that with "even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy (eudaimonia)."

And that is where we left it. I encourage anyone interested in the full context to go back and read the other thread. I'm starting this one so as not to further hijack the other thread. In this thread, we will inevitably talk about the katastematic/kinetic pleasure "controversy" but my primary goal at the beginning is to establish (IF I can establish) that katastematic pleasure... or pleasure primarily experienced in the mind as a stable state... is the one in which we can be more confident than pleasures resulting from external stimuli or phenomena.

Let the games begin...

Post by "Don" of February 10, 2023 at 11:57 PM

I really started down this road in part with the discovery of Metrodorus being quoted in [Clement of Alexandria's Stromata II.131, p. 498](#) which states ([in translation](#))

Quote from Clement of Alexandria

Metrodorus, in his book *On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects*, says: What else is the good of the soul but the sound state of the flesh, and the sure hope of its continuance?

The primary source for my contention was simply the title of Metrodorus's book: *On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects*. The Greek title reads: Περι του μειζονα ειναι την παρ' ημας αιτιαν προς ευδαιμονιαν της εκ των πραγματος αγαθον. The idea that the source of our well-being/eudaimonia is greater "in ourselves than that which arises from Objects" tells me that we can't *rely* on objects outside ourselves for pleasure (happiness, eudaimonia, well-being). We can certainly take pleasure in them, but we can't rely on them. The only thing we can have the most confidence in are the pleasures that are within ourselves. That's how I read that title.

The πράγμα in the title (πραγματος is simply the genitive plural) means "deed, act; thing; circumstances (in the plural)."

[Alfred Koerte's anthology of the sayings of Metrodorus](#) also referenceσ the following (using Google Translate, I know... but it's the quickest route):

Cicero, De Finibus II, 28, 92 ipse enim Metrodorus, paene alter Epicurus, beatum esse describit his fere verbis cum corpus bene constitutum sit, et sit exploratum ita futurum. (...for Metrodorus himself, almost another Epicurus, describes himself as happy in these words, when the body is well constituted, and the future is thus explored.)

Cicero Tusc. disp. II, 6, 17 Metrodorus quidem perfecte eum putat beatum, cui corpus bene constitutum sit et exploratum ita semper fore. (Cicero Tusc. disp. 2, 6, 17 Metrodorus, indeed, considers him perfectly happy, whose body is well formed and examined, and will always be so.)

Cicero Tusc. disp. V, 9, 27 tu vero Metrodore, qui. . . definieris summum bonum firma corporis affectione explorataque eius spe contineri, fortunae aditus interclusisti ? (Cicero Tusc. disp. 5, 9, 27 you, Metrodorus, who . . . You have determined that the highest good is contained by the firm affection of the body and its explored hope, have you blocked the access of fortune?)

Cicero de officiis III, 33, 117 nam si non modo utilitas sed vita omnis beata corporis firma constitutione eiusque constitutionis spe explorata, ut a Metrodoro scriptum est, continetur, certe haec utilitas et quidem summa — sic enim censent — cum honestate pugnabit. (Cicero de officii III, 33, 117 For if not only utility, but every happy life is contained in the firm constitution of the body and the hope of its constitution, as it is written by Metrodorus, surely this utility and indeed the highest - for so they think - will fight with honesty.)

Hoc fragmentum paene ad verbum congruit cum Epicuri fragmento 68 Us. (This fragment agrees almost verbatim with Epicurus' fragment 68 Us.).

Using [Attalus' site](#), here is Usener 68 which appears to be quoted from Plutarch and Aulus Gellius:

Quote from Usener 68

Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 4, p. 1089D: It is this, I believe, that has driven them, seeing for themselves the absurdities to which they were reduced, to take refuge in the "painlessness" and the "stable condition of the flesh," supposing that the pleasurable life is found in thinking of this state as about to occur in people or as being achieved; for the "stable and settled condition of the flesh," and the "trustworthy expectation" of this condition contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight for men who are able to reflect. Now to begin with, observe their conduct here, how they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth, from body to mind and then once more from mind to body.

Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights, IX.5.2: Epicurus makes pleasure the highest good but defines it as *sarkos eustathes katastema*, or "a well-balanced condition of the body."

This is just a start, but I thought I'd establish where my train of thought left the station first.

PS: Please note that the English translations from Koerte are really bad, now that I go back and read them more closely. They are simply cut and paste Google Translations from the Latin. Consider them at best poor Cliffs Notes. Refer to the Latin and puzzle out your own translations would be my recommendation.

Post by "Don" of February 11, 2023 at 12:31 AM

The description of kinetic and katastematic from *The Faith of Epicurus* by Benjamin Farrington (1967) is spot on from my perspective:

Quote from Farrington, p. 132

" 'pleasure' may be either kinetic (i.e., produced by a stimulus from without) or katastematic (i.e., a state of the organism created by itself without external stimulus)."

I posted a [screenshot of this page on a prior thread](#).

Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2023 at 5:25 AM

I am together with all of this with the probable exception of post 3. That is not what Diogenes Laertius says about the two categories, is it?

And of course I also want the record to reflect that I agree with Boris [Nikolsky](#) that the whole "katastematic" question is an overlay of non-Epicurean analysis adopted from other schools, well apart from Epicurus, which is an artifact of Diogenes Laertius' well meaning but imprecise attempt to categorize Epicurus according to theories well known at DL's time.

As for mental pleasures being more significant than bodily ones at times I agree that makes sense as stated by Torquatus in his discussion with Cicero, so Metrodorus' book title would fit that well.

I also think it is useful to highlight the confidence of maintaining ones pleasures and the ability to experience pleasures mentally (including the memory of pleasures of the past) which is also well documented.

The only real problem that I have is that framing all this in terms of "katastematic pleasure" seems to me to be bound to be interpreted by those who are not so subtle as Don to be justification for their continuing focus on this term for their implication that katastematic pleasure is something higher than any other kind of pleasure, which I believe is not justified and is very harmful.

Of the points raised by Don, points 4 and 5 are lost on the "katastematic pleasure above all" crowd, and the difficulty is that the view of "Confidence in Katastematic Pleasure" will continue to crowd out and undermine the proper focus, which was as summarized by Torquatus more accurately as

"pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them" (Reid)

Nothing there about "katastematic pleasure" being the primary goal," and to elevate it loosely as many do is to implicitly derogate all the rest.

So to me the task is to flesh out the benefits of the subject without confounding errors (which are in many cases intentional under the influence of Buddhism and Stoicism) even worse than before.

I have no doubt Don can do that here, but in general conversation about Epicurus elsewhere using this terminology is like hobbling oneself at the beginning by explaining "what's good is easy to get" and "what's terrible is easy to endure" to starving children. That's not a challenge that any Epicurean has any need to undertake voluntarily, because those contentions phrased that way are not well founded in the core texts of Epicurus himself. To me, those phrasings are best considered to be innocent but harmful diversions from the main core and stream of Epicurean thought. "Easy" and "katastematic" are similarly troublesome, and I don't advise people to look for unnecessary trouble!

Post by “Cassius” of February 11, 2023 at 5:52 AM

On looking up examples of damage that comes from loose construction, (which Don is surely avoiding, I know) I happened to look again at this from Wikipedia on the T. Take a look at the last sentence in this paragraph:

What is terrible is easy to endure

The Epicureans understood that, in nature, illness and pain is not suffered for very long, for pain and suffering is either "brief or chronic ... either mild or intense, but discomfort that is both chronic and intense is very unusual; so there is no need to be concerned about the prospect of suffering." Like "What is good is easy to get," recognizing one's physical and mental limit and one's threshold of pain — understanding how much pain the body or mind can endure — and maintaining confidence that pleasure only follows pain (and the avoidance of anxiety about the length of pain), is the remedy against prolonged suffering.[\[13\]](#)

The "REMEDY"? Or as people are fond of saying "the CURE"? I think Epicurus would say "No"! The remedy or the cure of a disease is to root it out and destroy it. What is being described here in 3 and 4 are "coping mechanisms" which are certainly desirable but in no way a "cure." I am surely in favor of aspirin, but aspirin does not really cure the source of the pain at least in most cases. The "cure" of these pains is not in thinking about them as short or mild, the cure comes in "curing" them, and to the extent that the phrasing of 3 and 4 suggests that Epicurus would suggest "coping" rather than "curing" this is extremely damaging to Epicurean theory.

I am not so down on 1 and 2 as I am on 3 and 4, but in sum the total effect of these is to more aptly deserve the name the "Four-Part Coping Mechanism" than the Four-Part "cure."

This is just the kind of diversion from proper focus that undue emphasis on the word "katastematic" creates in the minds of those who do not understand that "katastematic" (to the extent it has a clear definition stated by Epicurus at all) is simply one among many pleasures - and one that does not rate even the clear emphasis Epicurus gave to friendship and prudence as of special importance.

Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2023 at 8:06 AM

I thought of another perspective:

What about the pleasure of remembering past pleasures?

Is that not always available to us too?

That is something that we all I think acknowledge to be a great pleasure, and always available, just like confidence or whatever we are designating as "katastematic."

But none of us would suggest that "remembering past pleasures" is somehow the highest pleasure or the goal of all other pleasures, would we?

Thinking about why "katastematic pleasure" is an obsession of some people and why "remembering past pleasures" is not such an obsession is something to consider. The answer, I think, is that a word like "katastematic" is so obscure that it is easy to bend to one's own prior Stoic or Buddhist or Christian or Platonic disposition, while other and more clear words describing specific pleasures are not.

Again, not talking about Don, but about a cultural force that catapulted "Katastematic Pleasure" into what is alleged to be the full meaning of the philosophy.

Over and over I repeat that my words are not meant to be disagreeable to Don. Were he not exploring these issues we would not have such a good opportunity to examine it.

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 11, 2023 at 8:17 AM

[Don](#) here are some of my thought to points in post 1 above:

1. Not completely correct -- "strengthening" implies you do all sorts of things. But we only see that this is some kind of result that happens to correspond to removing fear of death and the gods (an after affect).
2. Not correct - impossible to do and where is this in Epicurean philosophy?
3. Not correct - we cultivate prudence so that we don't choose pleasures with cause much worse pains
4. Not completely correct - "Epicurus stresses over and over" -- this is an exaggeration, perhaps we should count when and where this is stated in the texts (how many times?)
5. Correct
6. Don't agree -- sounds Stoic - if that ox was smart he would find some bushes and other oxes to hunker down with instead of standing out in the wind -- luckily we aren't oxes.
7. Too vague -- if you are talking about being confident in your bodily health, and enjoying feeling healthy in the body, then I will agree

8. What about sitting out in the sunshine and the feeling that comes with enjoying that? (And this strengthens the feeling of "health in the body")

9. In my opinion what Metrodorus wrote doesn't take into consideration how the environment that you live in (which contains physical objects) affects your physical and mental well being. We are animals which require certain basic conditions for our physical and mental well being.

10. This seems not completely correct -- I am confident that my next meal will bring pleasure -- is that something which arises only in myself?

11. I don't agree with this "happy on the rack" -- I personally think this "happiness in all circumstances" doesn't make sense to me.

Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2023 at 8:27 AM

It's good to go number by number. When I reread the list I found I had completely slipped over the ox analogy item.

And for example the reference to the book by Metrodorus being cited by Clement of Alexandria... Is that title also cited by Diogenes Laertius? I thought DL cites the titles of Metrodorus' book too?

Lots of good things to talk about in this thread.

Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2023 at 8:32 AM

Ok so yes there is a list of Metrodorus' works in DL and that's not in it, right? Is it clear that Clement is talking about the same Metrodorus?

I don't really doubt the sentiment, given the statement in Torquatus that mental feelings can be stronger than bodily ones, but I don't know that we have more to work with than that, and I would expect the emphasis to be on "can" rather than "are always."

Being burned in Phalaris' bull might not be able to extinguish every scintilla of pleasurable memory until the person is dead, but for much of the time I would think the pain of the experience would be much stronger than those good memories. And during that time calling the victim "happy" would be more of a very broad abstraction rather than a common sense summary of total feelings (or even a specific feeling of wellbeing) as we normally attach to the

word.

Post by “Cassius” of February 11, 2023 at 8:46 AM

Now I am unfortunately inserting something random but I will be short: Here I feel in sympathy with Cicero. English, like Latin, is a rich language. There is something fundamentally wrong going on when we have a supposedly critical concept for which people insist on using an untranslated foreign word, as if English were insufficient to explain the concept. Like Lucretius, we should use our own language to explain what we mean by "katastematic pleasure," and if we can't or don't then that in itself indicates a major issue. And that's exactly what the great majority of commentators are doing in perpetuating the kinetic / katastematic discussion rather than engaging with people who come to Epicurean Philosophy for real answers.

Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 10:56 AM

Wow! Y'all have been busy. I'll respond to your various points, but I had to provide some context for my musk ox analogy.

The [musk ox](#) (umingmak "the bearded one" in the language of the Inuit) is easily my favorite animal, followed closely by the tardigrade (yes, big nerd here).

In the habitat in which the musk ox lives - the northern Arctic tundra - there are no trees, no bushes, nothing to hide behind. In fact, they typically prefer windswept land in winter where the wind keeps the snow swept away. They'll either stand in the wind or [lay down in a gale](#) to reduce their exposure. They appear unfazed by the conditions, and my metaphor was that they know the storm will pass, "the pain will be brief."

It's not a perfect analogy by any means, but, hey, I got to talk about musk oxen 😊



Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 11:23 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Ok so yes there is a list of Metrodorus' works in DL and that's not in it, right? Is It clear that Clement is talking about the same Metrodorus?

As I remember, DL doesn't list all of Epicurus's titles either. There are titles mentioned elsewhere that aren't in his list.

Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 11:49 AM

I'm finding it difficult to swipe between [Kalosyni](#) 's responses and my first post, so for easier reference, here are the two closer to each other.

[Quote from Don with Kalosyni's responses](#)

1. Epicurus advocates strengthening a quiet, calm, anxiety-free mind.
 1. Not completely correct -- "strengthening" implies you do all sorts of things. But we only see that this is some kind of result that happens to correspond to removing fear of death and the gods (an after affect).
2. Equanimity/tranquility/ataraxia is available at all times, even under duress and trying circumstances.
 1. Not correct - impossible to do and where is this in Epicurean philosophy?
3. IF we can cultivate ataraxia, we have a much better chance of making a good choice to remove, move around, or avoid the "obstacle to pleasure" than we would if we get anxious, feel "psychological unrest" or get agitated or fearful.
 1. Not correct - we cultivate prudence so that we don't choose pleasures with cause much worse pains
4. Tranquility / ataraxia are not the "goal of life" but Epicurus stresses over and over the importance of freedom from disturbance in the mind and "pain in the body" (I have a problem with this kind of translation of aponia, but we'll leave that for another time.) (Still not that time btw 😊)
 1. Not completely correct - "Epicurus stresses over and over" -- this is an exaggeration, perhaps we should count when and where this is stated in

the texts (how many times?)

5. PLEASURE is the goal, and tranquility is pleasure, freedom from anxiety is pleasure, but it is pleasure that is always available to us which is why Epicurus places such importance on it - NOT exclusionary importance as the ONLY pleasure we should pursue but of significant and paramount importance to give us the possibility of the best pleasurable life possible in addition to all the other pleasures we can experience.
 1. Correct.
6. My metaphor of what is meant by ataraxia / tranquility / calm is the picture of a musk ox, facing into the howling winter wind, legs braces, ice forming on its hair and face, knowing the disturbance will eventually pass ("Pain is short...") and it can then go on and paw the snow for luscious plants to eat. (Note: just a metaphor btw. Not saying musk oxen are Epicureans.)
 1. Don't agree -- sounds Stoic - if that ox was smart he would find some bushes and other oxes to hunker down with instead of standing out in the wind -- luckily we aren't oxes.
 2. Don NOTE: See post 11 above for more context on this.
7. My reading of katastematic pleasures, including ataraxia, are those that arise from within ourselves and that these are the only pleasures in life that we can be confident of at all times.
 1. Too vague -- if you are talking about being confident in your bodily health, and enjoying feeling healthy in the body, then I will agree
8. The kinetic pleasures arise from our interaction with external stimuli and phenomena.
 1. What about sitting out in the sunshine and the feeling that comes with enjoying that? (And this strengthens the feeling of "health in the body")
9. Metrodorus stresses the importance of both kinds of pleasures, but he also wrote a book entitled "On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects."
 1. In my opinion what Metrodorus wrote doesn't take into consideration how the environment that you live in (which contains physical objects) affects your physical and mental well being. We are animals which require certain basic conditions for our physical and mental well being.
10. Cassius raises the point that the following is a new assertion to him and he is not "aware of textual citations to support it": my reading of katastematic pleasures, including ataraxia, are those that arise from within ourselves and that these are the only pleasures in life that we can be confident of at all times.
 1. This seems not completely correct -- I am confident that my next meal will bring pleasure -- is that something which arises only in myself?
11. Cassius countered with citing Diogenes Laertius quote about the wise man will "cry out and lament" when on the rack.

I countered his quotation with the quote just prior to that with "even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy (eudaimonia)."

1. I don't agree with this "happy on the rack" -- I personally think this "happiness in all circumstances" doesn't make sense to me.

So, that'll be a little easier to refer to. I'm not saying I agree or disagree with Kalosyni's points at this point, but I do think they move the conversation forward. Thanks!

Post by "Godfrey" of February 11, 2023 at 1:25 PM

May I posit that the musk ox is actually pursuing pleasure and not tolerating pain out on the tundra? I get this from time spent with Milo the Alaskan Malamute. He prefers spending his time in the snow, in below zero temperatures, in a snowstorm. He'll hang inside with his people and other dogs, but given the choice, he'll go for the snow.

Of course this is no knock on the musk ox. It may even make it more Epicurean! I'm just questioning this particular analogy 😊

Post by "Don" of February 11, 2023 at 1:28 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Of course this is no knock on the musk ox. It may even make it more Epicurean! I'm just questioning this particular analogy 😊

Hey! Anything to make them musk ox more Epicurean 😄

So, we can't judge what brings the musk ox pleasure!

Post by "Don" of February 11, 2023 at 4:08 PM

I'm putting this here primarily as an interesting tidbit but also partly in reference to numbers 7 & 8 on my initial list.

From Philodemus, On Choices and Avoidances, columns 4 and 5:

[4] [Epicurus teaches us that good is easy for us to procure] and that evil is [not] only limited precisely because it is useless to have defined the good (τὰγαθόν), if it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to attain, nor to have fixed limits to evil, if it is difficult to bear because of its long duration. This knowledge has the effect of prohibiting both the pursuit of any [good] which is not by nature capable of eliminating pain - such are, most of the time, the [goods] which have motivated a search eager in humans -, and let none be discarded which does not prevent having pleasure -- that is how one must [conceive] most of [those which are acquired] gradually. And, in reverse, for [missing approximately 20 lines]

[5] [missing 3 lines] After that, it is also necessary to take into account the differences that present the desires (ἐπιθυμ[ιῶ]ν) relating to the pleasures and to what produces them, since precisely the lack of discernment on this subject gives rise to serious errors concerning the choices and the rejections. It is indeed because they regard as what is most necessary the goods which are most external to them, I mean a sovereign power, a dazzling fame, an exceptional wealth and sources of pleasure of this sort and other similar ones that they are in charge of the most painful evils; and that, conversely, [they remain deaf to their most necessary appetites] (ἀναγκαιοτάτων), because they take them for what is most exterior to them [missing about 20 lines].

Notes:

The "external" in the middle of column 5 is: External; alien; ξενοτάτων

II. c. gen. rei, strange to a thing, unacquainted with, ignorant of it; III. strange, unusual.

A related word appears in Epicurus fragment 266:

From the perspective of the infinite time that has passed, nothing novel occurs in the universe.

οὐδὲν ξένον ἐν τῷ παντι ἀποτελεῖται παρὰ τὸν ἤδη γεγενημένον χρόνον ἄπειρον.

The idea of ξένος is the strange, foreign, something or someone from "outside". There's a whole cultural thing about xenia but I don't think that's relevant in the current context.

Post by “Cassius” of February 11, 2023 at 4:51 PM

The external analysis seems reasonable to me, and the "'zenia" might indeed be relevant if less attractive to us today, but - as to:

[4] [Epicurus teaches us that good is easy for us to procure] and that evil is [not] only limited precisely because it is useless to have defined the good (τὰγαθόν), if it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to attain,

Do those brackets mean that this is partly or totally reconstructed? If so by how much? Is this bootstrapped off the later "Tetrapharmakon"?

Also is this Voula Tsouna? Do you have the more specific cite?

As you know I would myself never read "EASY" unless the text demands it. (Which reminds me to follow up at some point and determine if in fact a particular text does demand the "EASY" as if so I am not aware of it outside apparently the T)

thanks!

Post by "Don" of February 11, 2023 at 6:24 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

a particular text does demand the "EASY"

Easy is due to the eu- prefix on the verbs in lines 3 & 4 of the Tetrapharmakos.

Take a look at the LSJ definitions for a number of words in ancient Greek that begin eu-. Many have the connotation of easy, easily, without effort, honestly, etc.

Post by "Don" of February 11, 2023 at 7:07 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Also is this Voula Tsouna? Do you have the more specific cite?

It's a mashup of Tsouna, Les Epicuriens, and the text from the actual papyrus at papyri.info. No individual cite, just the Philodemus.

Post by “Joshua” of February 11, 2023 at 7:49 PM

Quote

Now I am unfortunately inserting something random but I will be short: Here I feel in sympathy with Cicero. English, like Latin, is a rich language. There is something fundamentally wrong going on when we have a supposedly critical concept for which people insist on using an untranslated foreign word, as if English were insufficient to explain the concept. Like Lucretius, we should use our own language to explain what we mean by "katastematic pleasure," and if we can't or don't then that in itself indicates a major issue. And that's exactly what the great majority of commentators are doing in perpetuating the kinetic / katastematic discussion rather than engaging with people who come to Epicurean Philosophy for real answers.

A quote from William Harris on the subject:

Quote

Latin has a relatively small vocabulary, with less than four thousand words in general, current use. Greek has three times that number, modern English prescribes 10,000 for a college student, 50,000 for a teacher, and there are half a million words available one way or another.

I'm not really prepared to unpack all that, but I thought it was worth mentioning. There are several cases in which foreign loan words seem more appropriate than any English equivalent would be, as in the cases of *schadenfreude*, *déjà vu*, or a *cappella*. I'm not sure *katastematic* is on that level though!

Post by “Cassius” of February 11, 2023 at 8:26 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Easy is due to the eu- prefix on the verbs in lines 3 & 4 of the Tetrpharmakos

Don are you aware of any other reference stating "easy" other than the tetrapharmokos ?

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 11, 2023 at 9:38 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

in the cases of schadenfreude, déjà vu, or a cappella

Who gets to decide what these words actually mean? Who do we all accept is the authority?

Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 10:16 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

Easy is due to the eu- prefix on the verbs in lines 3 & 4 of the Tetrpharmakos

Don are you aware of any other reference stating "easy" other than the tetrapharmokos ?

Line 3: euktēton εὔκτητον

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ε , εὐκρα τό-μελι , εὔκτητος](#)

Line 4: euekkarterēton εὐεκκαρτέρητον

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ε , εὐδρομ-ία , εὐεκ-καρτέρητος](#)

Compare euekkritos

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ε , εὐδρομ-ία , εὐέκ-κρι^τος](#)

Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 10:28 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Joshua](#)

in the cases of schadenfreude, déjà vu, or a cappella

Who gets to decide what these words actually mean? Who do we all accept is the authority?

This question is similar to the whole "Eskimos have a hundred words for snow" myth. The Inuit may have individual words for different types of snow, but English can still convey the meaning. It just takes more words. There may be one word in Inuktitut for it, but English can still say "packed snow that can be used to track an animal etc."

As to "who gets to decide", the authority at the present is the LSJ for ancient Greek that's available on Perseus.

The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) is the most authoritative dictionary of ancient Latin. It is the only lexicon to cover all surviving Latin texts from the earliest times down to AD 600. Another is the Lewis and Short.

These dictionaries take into account scholarship, context, historical linguistics, and other factors to convey the range of meaning inherent in the words.

Post by "Joshua" of February 11, 2023 at 10:29 PM

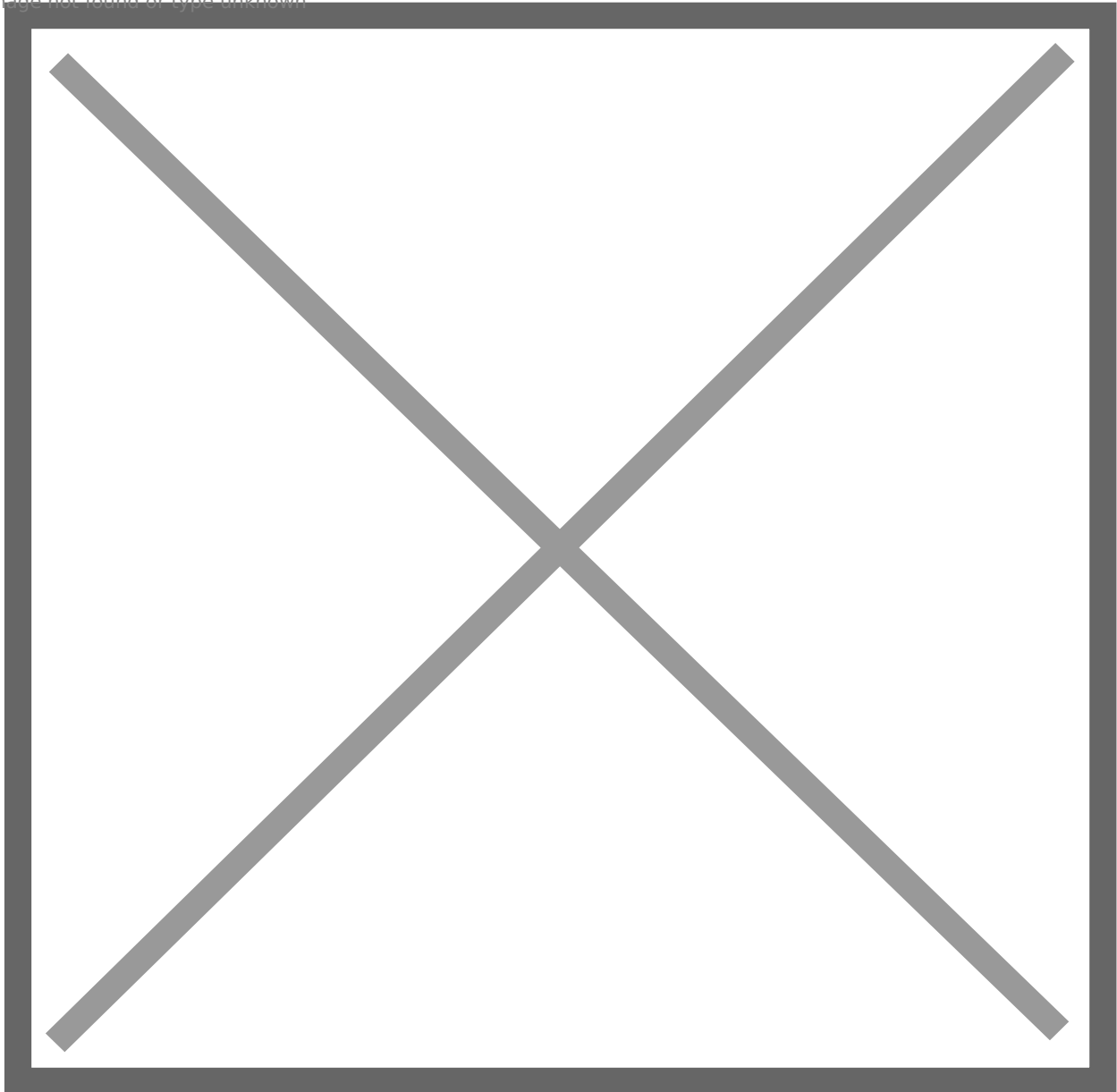
There are basically two schools of thought, one representing a prescriptive approach to language and embodied by the Académie Française, and the other, a descriptive approach to language typified by the Oxford English Dictionary.

I prefer the OED approach myself, which is much more in accord with the Lucretian view of language--a view that sees it as naturally and gradually developing and changing over time. In this view there is no authority. The Oxford English Dictionary is unusually thorough, running to twenty volumes in print, but its purpose is to record and document words rather than to narrowly define them. When a new word comes into common usage and has staying power, the OED will generally record it. The Académie Française will often reject them, and propose a different usage that is more properly French.

Asking whether words have meaning is to me rather like asking if a thing has value. The value of something is settled by what someone will trade for it. The meaning of words is settled by what people will commonly understand by them.

Post by “Joshua” of February 11, 2023 at 10:37 PM

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[In praise of ... the Académie Française | Editorial](#)

Editorial: The latest Anglo-Saxon barbarism to incur the displeasure of the 40 lifetime members is the abbreviation ASAP

www.google.com

Post by “Don” of February 11, 2023 at 11:02 PM

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2885-confidence-in-katastematic-pleasure/>

Another excerpt of interest from Epicurus, On Nature, book 14, column 24 (using Les Epicuriens, Google Translate on the French, and the papyrus transcription):

...we must count ourselves fortunate in this, too - that all who are engaged in such trivialities may have some sort of remedy by which it is possible, simply to attain at times calmness (καταστάσεις *katastaseis*) in the contemplation of nature, to get rid of their inborn ([σ]υμφύτου; French: *connaturel*) [trouble; *ταραχή*], which even later [missing 1 column].

[ἀ-]

γαπητ[ὸν] καὶ τοῦτ[ο], τὸ

δὴ πάντα τὸν συνε[χό]με-

νον [ταῖς] τοιαύταις περι-

εργ[ε]ῖαις ἔχειν οἰονὶ φάρ-

μακον δι' οὗ καταστάσεις

ἀπλ[ᾶς ἔστι]ν ἐν τῇ περι φύ-

σε[ως θεωρί]αι ἀπαλλαγῆ-

σε[σθαι τῆς σ]υμφύτου ἑαυ-

τα[ῖς ταραχ]ῆς ἢ καὶ ὕστε-

10ρον [..]..... ἦπο.. σιτ..

γε [..]..... ὥστε... ὑ.

[...]...... τοιοῦ[τοι]ς..

[...]...... οὐ [..]....

[□ -ca.?- □]

Compare to Fragment 116. I summon you to sustained enjoyment and not to empty and trifling virtues, which destroy your confidence in the fruits of what you have.

ἐγὼ δ' ἐφ' ἡδονὰς συνεχεῖς παρακαλῶ καὶ οὐκ ἐπ' ἀρετὰς κενὰς καὶ ματαίας καὶ ταραχώδεις ἐχούσας τῶν καρπῶν ἐλπίδας.

Post by “Cassius” of February 12, 2023 at 2:14 AM

This is where I wish we had more detailed info on the Vatican sayings:

VS08. The wealth required by Nature is limited and is easy to procure; but the wealth required by vain ideals extends to infinity

"Required?"

Is this one of the sayings that comes from Epicurus himself or one that certainly does not?

Questions questions questions.....

Being an advocate for Epicurus in the modern world, like in his time, is not for the faint of heart or for those who can't stand controversy. 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 12, 2023 at 8:48 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

VS08. The wealth required by Nature is limited and is easy to procure; but the wealth required by vain ideals extends to infinity

This is similar to [PD15](#).

Neither St. Andre or O'Connor include it in their translations -- O'Connor says in footnote that is it the same as [PD15](#).

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 12, 2023 at 8:56 AM

Pouring more salt into the wounds of translation issues...Here we see the complexity of translation (I found this [here](#)).

Bailey: 15. The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity.

Ο ΤΗΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ **ΚΑΙ ΩΡΙΣΤΑΙ ****ΚΑΙ ΕΥΠΟΡΙΣΤΟΣ**

ΕΣΤΙΝ Ο ΔΕ ΤΩΝ ΚΕΝΩΝ ΔΟΞΩΝ **ΕΙΣ ΑΠΕΙΡΟΝ ΕΚΠΙΠΤΕΙ. **

“The riches of nature are defined and easily procurable; but vain desires are insatiable.” Yonge (1853)

“Nature's wealth has its bounds and is easy to procure, but the wealth of vain fancies recedes to an infinite distance.” Hicks (1910)

“Nature's wealth at once has its bounds and is easy to procure; but the wealth of vain fancies recedes to an infinite distance.” Hicks (1925)

“The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity.” Bailey (1926)

“Natural wealth is limited and easily obtained; the wealth defined by vain fancies is always beyond reach.” Geer (1964)

“Nature's wealth is limited and easily obtained; the riches of idle fancies go on forever” O'Connor (1993)

“Natural wealth is both limited and easy to acquire. But wealth [as defined by] groundless opinions extends without limit.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

“Natural wealth is both limited and easily obtained, but vanity is insatiable.” Anderson (2004)

“The bounty of nature is not only easy to extract as a resource; it also has its own limits set [by nature] [so that one cannot run into excess insofar as he is attuned to nature;] but the opulence of hollow fancies plunges precipitously into a space that has no limits.” Makridis (2005)

“Natural wealth is both limited and easy to acquire, but the riches incited by groundless opinion have no end.” Saint-Andre (2008)

“Nature's wealth is restricted and easily won, while that of empty convention runs on to infinity.” Strodach (2012)

“Nature's wealth is both limited and easy to procure; but the wealth of groundless opinions vanishes into thin air.” Mensch (2018)

“Nature’s wealth is both well-defined and readily obtained; but the wealth founded on empty beliefs is endlessly elusive.” White (2021)

•

Post by “Don” of February 12, 2023 at 9:00 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

VS08. The wealth required by Nature is limited and is easy to procure; but the wealth required by vain ideals extends to infinity

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Neither St. Andre or O'Connor include it in their translations -- O'Connor says in footnote that is it the same as [PD15](#).

Nor Bailey. He simply references [PD15](#):

XV. The wealth demanded by Nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity. (Bailey)

ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος καὶ ὥρισται καὶ εὐπόριστός ἐστιν, ὁ δὲ τῶν κενῶν δοξῶν (kenōn doxōn "empty beliefs/ principles/ doctrines") εἰς ἄπειρον (apeiron - one of the words Epicurus used to describe the extent of the universe) ἐκπίπτει.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 12, 2023 at 9:02 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Nor Bailey. He simply references [PD15](#):

XV. The wealth demanded by Nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity. (Bailey)

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I am curious [Don](#) how would you translate it?

Post by “Don” of February 12, 2023 at 10:09 AM

As literal as possible:

ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος "The wealth of nature..."

καὶ ὤριστα* καὶ εὐπόριστός ἐστιν, "is the best and easily procured..."

ὁ δὲ τῶν κενῶν δοξῶν (kenōn doxōn "empty beliefs/principles/doctrines") εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκίπτει.
"But that of empty opinions runs onto infinity."

*πλοῦτος ploutos. Ex., plutocracy. Wealth, riches.

**ὤριστα is, according to LSJ, a contraction of ὁ ἄριστος (o aristos) from which we get aristocracy. So, it literally means "best, finest; best in its kind, and so in all sorts of relations, serving as Sup. of ἀγαθός (agathon "good"). I'm wondering if the "limited" translation is from the idea of oligos as in oligarchy as in rule by a few or limited number. If I've misunderstood ὤριστα I am more than open to correction!

PS. There is ὀριστός from ὀρίζω (horízō, "separate, delimit") but ὤριστα with its sense connected to "the good" seems to me to make sense here.

[ἄριστος - Wiktionary](#)

I would be curious to get @Nate 's take.

PS: I found it interesting that the predicates in the first phrase are ὤριστα ooristai and εὐπόριστός euporistos. The first appears to be a feminine plural and the second appears to be masculine? So, do they apply to ploutos (it would appear given the ending of the euporistos) or to "nature" physeos? This is where my Greek knowledge begins to break down 😞

Per LSJ:

[εὐπόρ-ιστος](#) , [ον](#), ([πορίζω](#))

A. easy to procure or secure, *Id.Ep.3p.63U.*, *Sent.21*, *Fr.469*, *Dsc.Eup. Praef.*: Sup., [ἀμπεχόνη](#), [οἰκία](#), *Ph.2.424*, cf. *Phld.D.1.15*; feasible, **Cic.Att.7.1.7**; [εὐπόριστα](#) (sc. [φάρμακα](#)), [τά](#), common, family medicines: title of work by *Dsc.*, *Orib.Eup.Praef.* (called [περὶ ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων](#) in codd. of *Dsc.Eup.*); also, ordinary food, opp. game out of season, **Plu.Luc.40**, **Pomp.2. II**. Act., providing one's subsistence with ease, **Ptol.Tetr.155**.

Post by "Joshua" of February 12, 2023 at 11:40 AM

Quote

-GAUNT-

All places that the eye of heaven visits

Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.

Teach thy necessity to reason thus:

There is no virtue like necessity.

Think not the King did banish thee,

But thou the King. Woe doth the heavier sit

Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.

Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honor,

And not the King exiled thee; or suppose

Devouring pestilence hangs in our air

And thou art flying to a fresher clime.

Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it

To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou com'st.

Suppose the singing birds musicians,

The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence

strewed,

The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more

Than a delightful measure or a dance;

For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite

The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

-BOLINGBROKE-

O, who can hold a fire in his hand

By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
O no, the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when he bites but lanceth not the sore.
Display More

I was thinking of this exchange in *Richard II* in relation to '*ataraxia* under duress'. John of Gaunt is Bolingbroke's father, and has dutifully argued for his own son's banishment--a service to the king which he comes to bitterly regret. One senses that his advice is as much for himself as for his son. But Bolingbroke is having none of it. "Who can hold a fire in his hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus?"

Post by “Eikadistes” of February 12, 2023 at 11:42 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

As literal as possible:

ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος "The wealth of nature..."

καὶ ὤρισται* καὶ εὐπόριστός ἐστιν, "is the best and easily procured..."

ὁ δὲ τῶν κενῶν δοξῶν (kenōn doxōn "empty beliefs/principles/doctrines") εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπίπτει. "But that of empty opinions runs onto infinity."

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<https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E1%BD%A4...%84%CE%BF%CF%82>

PS. There is ὀριστός from ὀρίζω (horízō, "separate, delimit") but ὤρισται with its sense connected to "the good" seems to me to make sense here.

https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E1%BC%84...2#Ancient_Greek

I would be curious to get @Nate 's take.

Display More

I agree with this expression of KD15.

Post by "Don" of February 12, 2023 at 11:57 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

VS08. The wealth required by Nature is limited and is easy to procure; but the wealth required by vain ideals extends to infinity

"Required?"

Yeah, I don't see *required* in the Greek. It literally just says "is" ἐστιν.

Post by "Don" of February 12, 2023 at 12:00 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Quote

-GAUNT-

All places that the eye of heaven visits

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I had thoughts of ataraxia under duress watching this interview with David Hogg. He addresses the idea specifically (using calm not ataraxia, of course) starting around 0:58.

<https://youtu.be/npA54A3Cq14>

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 12, 2023 at 5:52 PM

Thinking about the larger context:

It possible that the "calm" within Epicureanism is referring to the feeling which arises when one thinks about "when death is, I will not be" and the "gods do not punish" (they are not the cause of thunder and lightning and they are not involved with humans).

So it is not a "mind-over-matter" like in Hinduism or Buddhism, but rather reasoning through those two things (death and the nature of the gods).

Is there any other practices in Epicureanism besides these two, that would lead to a feeling of "calm"?

Post by "Don" of February 12, 2023 at 6:03 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

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[37] "Hence, since such a course is of service to all who take up natural science, I, who devote to the subject my continuous energy and reap the calm enjoyment of a life like this" ~ Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus

ἐγγαληνίζω τῷ βίῳ, "spend life calmly"

from γαληνίζω ,

A.calm, still, esp. waves or winds, Hp.Vict.3.71, E.Fr.1079.

2. intr., become calm, prob. in Hp. Morb.Sacr.13; to be calm or tranquil, Alex.178.6, Ph.1.354; "τὸ γαληνίζον τῆς θαλάττης" Arist.Pr.936a5:—so in Med., Xenocr. ap. Orib.2.58.98.

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 12, 2023 at 6:11 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Hence, since such a course is of service to all who take up natural science, I, who devote to the subject my continuous energy and reap the calm enjoyment of a life like this" ~ Epicurus,

So sounds like "calmness" coming through the practice of studying natural science?

Post by “Don” of February 12, 2023 at 6:16 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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So sounds like "calmness" coming through the practice of studying natural science?

And at the end of the letter to Herodotus, Epicurus writes:

"It is of such a sort that those who are already tolerably, or even perfectly, well acquainted with the details can, by analysis of what they know into such elementary perceptions as these, best prosecute their researches in physical science as a whole ; while those, on the other hand, who are not altogether entitled to rank as mature students can in silent fashion and as quick as thought run over the doctrines most important for their peace of mind (γαληνισμόν galenismōn - related to the same word he uses to describe his own calm coming from the study of nature)."

Post by “Onenski” of February 12, 2023 at 10:46 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Metrodorus stresses the importance of both kinds of pleasures, but he also wrote a book entitled "On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects."

Hi, Don!

I think I have another possible interpretation of Metrodorus' book title. This is the idea: who is "ourselves" referring to? The first and obvious interpretation is "each one of us, internally". Another possible interpretation is "us, as a community of epicurean friends".

What I mean is that we can derive two very different ideas from the title of the book. The first one is, I think, in some sense ascetic, or individualistic: "I can be happy and have pleasure by myself. I don't need the objects around me" (I'm exaggerating for clearness). The second one is more social: "the greatest pleasures are not in wine, banquets, money, etc. The greatest pleasures are in ourselves, people, in the moments we have in our community with our friends".

All this depends, of course, on the ambiguity of the "ourselves" in English, so if it doesn't exist in Greek, just ignore my comment ☐☐

In any case, my own opinion about katastematic pleasures is that I think they don't derive from epicurean physics, so the only reason we can have to defend them must be a practical reason. So, if we accept the distinction between kinetic and katastematic pleasures, it must be because is useful for having a joyful life.

Post by “Don” of February 12, 2023 at 10:53 PM

I haven't decided if this is going to be useful or not, but I went through Diogenes Laertius, Book 10, and pulled out the times that ataraxia (or a form of the word) shows up:

Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus:

[80] we must not suppose that our treatment of these matters fails of accuracy, so far as it is needful to ensure our tranquillity and happiness*. When, therefore, we investigate the causes of celestial and atmospheric phenomena, as of all that is unknown, we must take into account the variety of ways in which analogous occurrences happen within our experience ; while as for those who do not recognize the difference between what is or comes about from a single cause and that which may be the effect of any one of several causes, overlooking the fact that the objects are only seen at a distance, and are moreover ignorant of the conditions that render, or do not render, peace of mind** impossible --all such persons we must treat with contempt. If then we think that an event could happen in one or other particular way out of several, ***we shall be as tranquil*** when we recognize that it actually comes about in more ways than one as if we knew that it happens in this particular way.

*τὸ ἀτάραχον καὶ μακάριον (to atarakhon (&) makarion): atarakhon is a form of the word ataraxia; makarion is the word used to describe the blessedness of the gods.

**ἀταρακτῆσαι ataraktesai

**ἀταρακτῆσομεν ataraktesomen "we shall be tranquil"

[82] But mental tranquillity* means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths.

*ἀταραξία ataraxia (literally spelled ataraksia)

Epicurus, Letter to Pythocles:

[85] In the first place, remember that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena, whether taken along with other things or in isolation, has no other end in view than peace of mind* and firm conviction.

*ἀταραξίαν ataraxian/ataraksian

[96] if you fight against clear evidence, you never can enjoy genuine peace of mind*.

* ἀταραξίας ataraxias/ataraksias

Diogenes Laertius, X.128:

[128] He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and *tranquillity of mind*, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life.

* τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν ten tes psykhes ataraxian/ataraksian

Diogenes Laertius, X.136:

The words of Epicurus in his work On Choice are : "*Peace of mind* and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest ; joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity."

ὁ δ' Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἰρέσεων οὕτω λέγει: "ἡ μὲν γὰρ *ἀταραξία* καὶ ἀπονία καταστηματικά ἐῖσι ἡδοναί: ἡ δὲ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα βλέπονται."

[PD17:](#)

17. The just man enjoys the *greatest peace of mind*, while the unjust is full of the utmost **disquietude**.

Ὁ δίκαιος *ἀταρακτότατος*, ὁ δ' ἄδικος πλείστης **ταραχῆς** γέμων.

*ἀταρακτότατος ataraktotatos

Compare **ταραχῆς** tarakhes (the latter part of a + taraksia "not + disquietude")

I would add to this the two forms of γαλήνιος "calm" shows up as well.

Post by "Don" of February 12, 2023 at 11:27 PM

[Quote from Onenski](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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I think you raise a very interesting interpretation. As you said, it depends on the Greek. So, let's see what we can find:

On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects

Περι του μειζονα ειναι την παρ' ημας αιτιαν προς ευδαιμονιαν της εκ των πραγματων αγαθον

Let's break this down...which I should have done at the beginning! I should know better than to take any translation at face value.

Περι just introduces the book title like "On.." "About..." "Concerning..."

μειζονα is the "greater, larger"

την παρ' ημας αιτιαν has an embedded phrase is something like "the cause for us"

The "in Ourselves" in the original translation appears to come from παρ' ημας appears to be stock phrase in the language meaning "resulting from us"

ημας is the accusative of ἡμεῖς (hēmeîs): us (1st person plural)

προς ευδαιμονιαν toward happiness (lit. eudaimonia)

της εκ των πραγματων αγαθον that which is good from things (pragmaton)

πρᾶγμα (prâgma) n (genitive πρᾶγματος); third declension

- deed, act, fact
- occurrence, matter, affair
- thing
- (in the plural) circumstances, affairs

So, I'm not sure that solves the question, but there's some information to add to the discussion.

Another translation now could be "Concerning that cause resulting from us that leads to eudaimonia is greater than that which is good from things." Clunky, I know, but as literal as I can make it.

PS. My main hesitation in ascribing a community meaning to "resulting from ourselves" is that the quote from the book describes an internal state: "What else is the good of the soul but the sound state of the flesh, and the sure hope of its continuance?"

Post by "Godfrey" of February 13, 2023 at 1:31 AM

Quote from Don

[82] But mental tranquillity* means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths.

*ἀταραξία ataraxia (literally spelled ataraksia)

This reads to me like a definition.... 🤔

Post by “Don” of February 13, 2023 at 7:44 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

As literal as possible:

ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος "The wealth of nature..."

καὶ ὤρισται* καὶ εὐπόριστός ἐστιν, "is the best and easily procured..."

ὁ δὲ τῶν κενῶν δοξῶν (kenōn doxōn "empty beliefs/principles/doctrines") εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπίπτει. "But that of empty opinions runs onto infinity."

*πλοῦτος ploutos. Ex., plutocracy. Wealth, riches.

**ὤρισται is, according to LSJ, a contraction of ὁ ἄριστος (o aristos) from which we get aristocracy. So, it literally means "best, finest; best in its kind, and so in all sorts of relations, serving as Sup. of ἀγαθός (agathon "good"). I'm wondering if the "limited" translation is from the idea of oligos as in oligarchy as in rule by a few or limited number. If I've misunderstood ὤρισται I am more than open to correction!

PS. There is ὀριστός from ὀρίζω (horizō, "separate, delimit") but ὤρισται with its sense connected to "the good" seems to me to make sense here.

https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E1%BC%84...2#Ancient_Greek

I would be curious to get @Nate 's take.

PS: I found it interesting that the predicates in the first phrase are ὤρισται ooristai and εὐπόριστός euporistos. The first appears to be a feminine plural and the second appears to be masculine? So, do they apply to ploutos (it would appear given the

ending of the euporistos) or to "nature" physeos? This is where my Greek knowledge begins to break down 😞

Per LSJ:

[εὐπόρ-ιστος](#) , [ον](#), ([πορίζω](#))

A. *easy to procure or secure*, *Id.Ep.3p.63U.*, *Sent.21*, *Fr.469*, *Dsc.Eup. Praef.*: *Sup.*, [ἀμπεχόνη](#), [οικία](#), *Ph.2.424*, cf. *Phld.D.1.15*; *feasible*, **Cic.Att.7.1.7**; [εὐπόριστα](#) (sc. [φάρμακα](#)), [τά](#), *common, family medicines*: title of work by *Dsc.*, *Orib.Eup.Praef.* (called [περὶ ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων](#) in codd. of *Dsc.Eup.*); also, *ordinary food*, opp. *game out of season*, **Plu.Luc.40**, **Pomp.2. II.** Act., *providing one's subsistence with ease*, **Ptol. Tetr.155**.

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I just realized there's this epitaph of Epicurus from Atheneaus quoted by Diogenes Laertius:

And here is the epigram²⁰ in which Athenaeus eulogizes him :

[12] Ye toil, O men, for paltry things and incessantly begin strife and war for gain ;

but nature's wealth extends to a moderate bound, whereas vain judgements have a limitless range.

This message Neocles' wise son heard from the Muses or from the sacred tripod at Delphi.²¹

[12] ἄνθρωποι, μοχθεῖτε τὰ χεῖρονα, καὶ διὰ κέρδος ἄπληστοι νεικέων ἄρχετε καὶ πολέμων:

τᾶς φύσιος δ' ὁ πλοῦτος ὄρον τινὰ βαιὸν ἐπίσχει, αἱ δὲ κεναὶ κρίσεις τὰν ἀπέραντον ὁδόν.

τοῦτο Νεοκλήος πιτυτὸν τέκος ἢ παρὰ Μουσέων ἔκλυεν ἢ Πυθοῦς ἐξ ἱερῶν τριπόδων.

²⁰ Anthology of Planudes. iv. 43.

This text mentions "nature's wealth extends to a moderate bound, whereas vain judgements have a limitless range" but the same wording is not used as in the PD itself. However, in light of this, I can see how the PD is translated with "limited". That said, I'm not 100% convinced that "the best of its kind" can't be correct. I'm less sure than I was, but not entirely dissuaded.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 13, 2023 at 8:26 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[82] But mental tranquillity* means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths.

*ἀταραξία ataraxia (literally spelled ataraksia)

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

This reads to me like a definition.... 🤔

Yes! And I think that this is very important. Because the "tranquility" within Epicureanism is a state of mind which is **free from worry**. It is not a state of the body (sitting in stillness). And it is not a state of mind which comes from doing something like Buddhist or Hindu meditations. Rather it comes from studying nature and reasoning out issues such as the nature of the natural world, the nature of god(s), the nature of death, using proper choices and avoidances, being confident in future health and security, being confident in support from friends and good neighbors, and self-sufficiency.

So that when we do talk about "tranquility" within Epicureanism, it is a result caused by the mind's ability to impliment and reason through all the things I listed in the above paragraph. We would never say: let's concentrate hard to create some tranquility (that would be putting the cart before the horse) but instead we would simply focus on doing what needs to be done to remove worries from the mind (which may entail making some choices and taking action).

Post by "Don" of February 13, 2023 at 10:07 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

"tranquility" within Epicureanism is a state of mind which is free from worry.

Agreed.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

It is not a state of the body (sitting in stillness). And it is not a state of mind which comes from doing something like Buddhist or Hindu meditations.

Agreed. I would still say that the faculty, state, condition can be strengthened (so to speak) to serve as the foundation for living a pleasurable life.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

it comes from studying nature and reasoning out issues such as the nature of the natural world, the nature of god(s), the nature of death, using proper choices and avoidances, being confident in future health and security, being confident in support from friends and good neighbors, and self-sufficiency.

Agreed And I would say the strengthening of the confidence of ataraxia comes from the continuing study (meditation) of nature etc

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

So that when we do talk about "tranquility" within Epicureanism, it is a result caused by the mind's ability to impliment and reason through all the things I listed in the above paragraph.

Agreed. But tranquility and calm mean tranquility and calm. The metaphor I'd use for it (which seems to be a connotation of the Greek) is like sailing on smooth, tranquil water.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

We would never say: let's concentrate hard to create some tranquility (that would be putting the cart before the horse) but instead we would simply focus on doing what needs to be done to remove worries from the mind (which may entail making some choices and taking action).

Agreed, I think. There is concentration involved and contemplation and theorizing and putting that contemplation into action. I still translate the wise one's characteristic as "taking more pleasure in contemplation."